

## Long Version

### PERS | Help At the Push of A Button

Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS) offer seniors, adults needing care, and their loved ones the comfort of knowing that help is always close at hand ..

By simply pushing an emergency call button on a pendant or wrist band, a senior immediately alerts—by phone line—an emergency monitoring center that is in operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Upon determining the nature of the situation by talking with the senior over the system's two-way speakerphone, the monitoring center operator dispatches appropriate help. For instance, an ambulance is summoned, or in the case of a minor problem, a designated neighbor or family member.

PERS systems also can be equipped to alert caregivers when no activity is detected in a certain time period, or when a client does not push their button to check in.

To meet the changing needs of seniors, certain systems can be expanded with accessory features. For instance, motion detectors, pressure-sensitive mats and window and door sensors can be added to alert the monitoring center and caregivers to the wandering of seniors who develop Alzheimer's disease or other dementia-related conditions.

When selecting a PERS, make sure the system's monitoring center has professionally trained staff, emergency backup power for uninterrupted service during electrical outages and state-of-the-art computer systems that allow the PERS staff to provide instant, complete information about your loved one to emergency personnel.

The systems I recommend automatically and silently check the unit daily to verify the unit is functioning properly. Most companies request the client to push their button monthly to make sure things are working. For the same money wouldn't you rather have the security of knowing they system is working well?

(Falls side bar)

### PERS: Limiting the Effects of Falls

A personal emergency response system (PERS) can limit the health effects of a fall or other medical emergency by reducing the time a senior citizen has to wait for help.

A study by Concordia University of Montreal found that PERS systems reduced hospital admissions by 11.7 percent and inpatient days by 39.4 percent, according to the National Library of Medicine Gateway, a service of the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

The Centers for Disease Control report that more than one third of American adults 65 and older fall each year. However, seeking immediate medical attention usually result in quicker and fuller recovery—a much better outcome and improved chance of returning to independent living.

Here are some more facts about falls:

- 50 percent of those over 80 fall each year
- At least 60 percent of falls happen at home
- Falls are the leading cause of death by injury among older Americans
- Falls are one of the most common causes of nonfatal injuries and hospital trauma admissions.
- There is a higher incidence for persons with conditions such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, ALS and diabetes

The statistics above are considered conservative, as many falls go unreported due to embarrassment, fear of losing independence and acceptance of falls as an unavoidable part of aging.